
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	14th Street Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1451 Q Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	February 25, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	21-103	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition

Owner Kyra Agarwal, with plans prepared by Jim Foster of Arcadia Design, seeks concept design review for a rear and partial third story roof addition on a two-story house in the 14th Street Historic District.

Property Description

1451 Q Street is a two-story Italianate brick rowhouse set above a partially raised basement constructed in 1878. It was built as a single structure rather than part of a coordinated row, and includes a narrow (approximately 3') side yard. Distinctive and original features of the house include a one-story brick projecting bay, stone entrance steps, wood double doors and two-over-two segmental-arched windows, and a bracketed cornice atop both the bay and the top of the façade.

Proposal

On the front, an iron railing would be added atop the bay and a window well added in front of two of the three sides of the bay to allow for the creation of basement windows. Window openings in the existing east wall of the house would be expanded for ganged French doors opening to balconies on the first and second floors.

On the rear, a non-historic wood stair/porch structure would be removed and replaced with a two-story addition in roughly the same footprint. The roof of the house would be removed and reconstructed at the height of the existing 2nd floor ceiling and a third floor addition constructed, set back 17 feet from the front and the 10'9" depth of the two-story addition in the rear. A terrace would be created on the front portion of the existing roof, with the parapet wall serving as the required guard rail. The rear and roof additions would be clad in brick on the west side and siding on the other three.

Evaluation

The iron railing atop the front bay takes the form of other railings found on similar houses in the historic district (such as at 1435 Q Street). The taller middle window opening on the second floor makes it likely that this type of railing originally existed here, rather than the lower iron

cresting that is found on bays where the second floor window openings are not elongated (as at 1441 Q Street).

Additional clarity is needed on the proposal for the new basement window openings and window wells to ensure that they are consistent with the principles in the Board's *Basement Entrances and Window* guideline:

4.2 Windows should remain smaller than and subordinate to upper story windows.

4.4 Creating new basement windows may be appropriate if they are unobtrusive and aligned with fenestration of upper stories.

4.5 New or replaced basement windows should be compatible with the character of the property and consistent with the requirements for replacement windows on historic property, matching the general appearance, profiles and dimensions of historic windows.

4.6 Window wells for basement windows should be kept to the minimum dimensions required by code.

The plans should be revised to provide two individual window wells (rather than one large continuous well), and the depth of the areaway clarified to ensure that it is less than 30" deep and will not require a guard rail around it.

The alteration and increased fenestration in the east side elevation of the house is consistent with the principles outlined in the Board's *Window Repair and Replacement* guideline:

3.4 Replacement windows facing a rear yard, internal courtyard, light well or are on strictly utilitarian elevations should match the general characteristics of the historic window but flexibility will be applied.

3.5 Selective alteration or blocking up of window openings on secondary elevations that are strictly utilitarian may be appropriate if it is compatible in general character with the building and if it does not affect important character-defining features.

The rear addition is subordinate to and compatible in design, height, footprint, scale, and materials with the house and the historic district.

The roof addition has been redesigned since initial submission of the plans in response to on-site mocks and feedback from the ANC. A terrace atop the third floor addition proved to be extremely visible from multiple vantage points and has been eliminated, the front setback has been increased, the side elevation facing and visible from 15th Street changed to brick, and the height of the front portion of the addition reduced in height by 18 inches. In response to concerns from the ANC about visibility of roof furniture (and people) on the second-floor terrace facing the street, a planter box has been provided to pull the occupiable portion of the terrace back 3 feet from the parapet.¹ The resulting changes have eliminated visibility of the third floor

¹ This change appears on the floor plans but not on the section drawings, which need to be revised.

addition from in front and over the top of the building, but some visibility remains from long perspective views from the east. However, this visibility is mitigated by the third floor being seen against the backdrop of taller buildings immediately to the west rather than establishing a new height or roofline for the block where the addition would be seen breaking the roofline of the block. If the third story addition was clad in stucco or thin-brick, rather than siding, it would visually coexist with the other surrounding masonry buildings and not be discordant in material, height or massing to the house or the block.

The plans do not provide information on where mechanical equipment will be placed. It is recommended that it be placed either in the rear or side yards or on the second floor terrace behind the parapet walls rather than on the roof of the third floor addition where it would potentially be visible from street view.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be generally compatible with the character of the historic district, contingent on the third story addition being clad in a stucco or brick finish, that the basement window wells be modified as outlined above, and that provision be made for mechanical equipment in a visually unobtrusive location, and that final approval be delegated to staff.

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